**Import of Wheat by STC**

454. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the STC imported wheat from Australia;

(b) if so, the total quantity of wheat imported and the price given;

(c) whether Government received any complaints of the agreement for the import of wheat from Australia; and

(d) if so, the action taken on the complaint?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. STC has contracted for import of 1.5 million MT+/-5% Australian Standard while Wheat from Australia at a FOB price of US$ 142.50 PMT.

(c) and (d) A Civil Writ Petition making various allegations on wheat import came before a Division Bench of Delhi High Court on 27.4.98. After hearing the petition relating to the allegations levelled against and countered by STC Counsel, the Bench dismissed the petition.

CBI has made a reference to requisition the relevant records pertaining to wheat import for carrying out secrutiny/secret verification of the deal. However, CBI have clarified that its request may not be construed to mean that CBI has taken up any open inquiry/investigation in the matter.

CVC have also sought for information on certain points in regard to the deal. Relevant information has already been supplied to the Commission. A reference has also been received in PMO from an hon'ble MP raising allegations in the deal.

A reply clarifying the position will be sent shortly.

**Export import Growth**

455. SHRI A VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the export import growth from 1991-92 to 1997-98;

(b) what are the reasons for dismal performance in 1997-98; and

(c) the details regarding the steps taken by Government to imporve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The details regarding export/import growth from 1991-92 to 1997-98 are given below as per DGCI&S data:

**Percentage Growth %**

| Year | Exports | | Imports | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | US$ Million | Rupees crores | US$ Million | Rupees crores |
| 1991-92 | -1.4 | 35.3 | -19.4 | 10.8 |
| 1992-93 | 3.6 | 21.9 | 12.7 | 32.4 |
| 1993-94 | 20.0 | 29.9 | 6.5 | 15.3 |
| 1994-95 | 18.4 | 18.5 | 22.9 | 23.1 |
| 1995-96 | 20.8 | 28.6 | 28.0 | 36.4 |
| 1996-97 (Provisional) | 4.01 | 10.39 | 5.99 | 12.49 |
| 1997-98 (Provisional) | 2.64 | 7.45 | 5.79 | 10.75 |

(b) Export performance is influenced inter-alia by international market conditions, export competitivness of domestic, industry, supporting infrastructure, policy framework etc. During 1997-98 exports were affected due to a general slow down in world trade and especially the recession in many countries in South East Asia including Japan, supply side contraints in some sectors, slow erosion of competitiveness and slow industrial growth.

(c) Export Promotions measures are continuously being taken by Government through changes in policies and procedures for providing a conducive environment, involvement of States in Export Promotion and consultation with Trade and Industry. Some of the recent steps taken in this regard include modification in DEPB rates, announcement of DEPB rates for about 300 new export items, preparing a medium term export strategy for growth of exports, launching of Focus LAC Scheme and strengthening incentive schemes.